

the squirrel came to close quarters the lizard snapped at him, but the little fellow was much too quick for him, jumping back or round the bough, and then tackling the Monitor from another quarter. At last the latter gave in and came down the tree pursued by the squirrel with tail erect and hair frilled out in great triumph. The Monitor ran into the grass, where my terrier settled accounts with him forthwith, greatly to the sweeper's horror, who thought it was all up with "Tim, Tim." It is curious that here in the North-West Provinces the appearance of one of these monitors causes more dismay among the natives than any Krait or Cobra.* One of my men assured me he had known a woman who died from the bite of a bis-cobra.

G. J. RAYMENT.

Babugarh, September, 1889.

2.—THE WATER RAIL (*RALLUS AQUATICUS*).

I WRITE to inform you that I killed a specimen of the Water Rail (*Rallus aquaticus*) in the Bobri Taluka of Shikarpur, Collectorate of Sind, on 5th November. Hume and Marshall describe it as extremely rare, and only known to them as having been seen in the Dun, with the exception of two specimens, one of which was killed near Sialkote and the other near Abbotabad. I have carefully examined the bird, and it is undoubtedly *Rallus aquaticus* and not *Rallus indicus* the distinctive points being unmistakable.

D. GEORGE.

Sukkur, 6th November 1889.

3.—HOW A SNAKE CLIMBS.

A SPECIMEN of *Lycodon alicans* was killed yesterday in my house while climbing up a bamboo blind (chick) stretched vertically and lashed in position. I saw the operation myself. The snake evidently climbed by hitching the edges of the ventral shields on to those of the bamboo lattice of the blind, and not by winding his body, which was entirely on the side of the blind next to me, round the bamboos. He moved slowly and not painfully or awkwardly. This species of snake is notoriously apt at escape, but this is the best thing in that way I have seen of it.

W. F. SINCLAIR.

Alibag, September 1889.

* It is exceedingly difficult to account for the widespread belief, amongst the natives of India, in the so-called "Bis-Cobra." The young of the Common Indian Monitor (*Varanus dracæna*) is greatly dreaded in most parts of the Bombay Presidency, although, curiously enough, when the lizard becomes full grown, it is called the "Ghorpad," and is recognized by the country people as being perfectly harmless. The young differ considerably from the adult, in having a mottled appearance. Many other equally harmless lizards are thought to be exceedingly poisonous by the natives in other parts of the county, where the term Bis-Cobra is applied to them—*Vide* Mr. Vidal's interesting paper on the subject on page 71 in Vol. 3 of the Society's Journal.—ED.